



FACT SHEET

USAF Fact Sheet

Air Warfare Center Public Affairs Division

Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada 89191-7078

Phone (702) 652-2750 DSN 682-2750 FAX (702) 652-9838

15th Reconnaissance Squadron

Mission

The 15th Reconnaissance Squadron is currently in operation at Indian Springs Air Force Auxiliary Field, Nev., and is the second of only two of the Air Force's RQ-1 *Predator* unmanned aerial vehicle, or UAV, squadrons.

The mission of the 15 RS is to provide theater commander with deployable, long endurance, near real-time reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition to close the sensor-to-shooter time line. The squadron operates medium altitude multi-sensor platforms to locate, identify and report battlefield conditions to warfighters. It also collects, exploits and distributes imagery and intelligence products to theater CINCs and national-level leadership.



Background

The 15th Reconnaissance Squadron's origins go back to May 9, 1917, when it was stood up as the 2nd Aviation School Squadron. The original mission of the squadron was part of the defense force for the New York City area, flying coastal patrols. From 1921-1927, the main focus of the squadron was flying training, including gunnery, observation, reconnaissance, photography, radio familiarization and similar missions.

During the early stages of World War II, the 15th supported the Field Artillery School in Oklahoma. On March 26, 1944, the unit deployed to England and began combat operations over France. Its first combat mission was photographic reconnaissance on an F-6. On June 6, 1944, the 15th received credit for the first aerial victory by a tactical reconnaissance pilot as well as the first victory of D-Day. The unit continued armed reconnaissance operations in the European theater until July 1945. After returning to the

United States, the squadron provided visual and photographic reconnaissance and artillery adjustments for Army, Navy and Air Forces until it was deactivated in April 1949.

The 15th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Photo-jet, was reactivated on Feb 5, 1951, in Japan and immediately deployed to Korea to provide visual and photographic reconnaissance. The unit flew F/RF-80s and F/RF-85s during this period. In March 1954 the unit moved back to Japan and in August 1956, moved to Okinawa. The unit transitioned to RF-84s from 1956-1958 and then to the RF-101s, continuing its long history of photographic reconnaissance. The unit became heavily involved in Southeast Asia in early 1965, though this only lasted until April 1, 1966. During the summer and fall of 1966, the squadron transitioned to the RF-4C, the aircraft that it was to operate for the next 25 years.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the squadron maintained aerial surveillance capabilities in support of American ground, naval and air forces in the Far East. The 15th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron was deactivated Oct. 1, 1990. The unit was reactivated as the 15th Tactical Intelligence Squadron on Feb. 20, 1991. On April 13, 1992, the unit was redesignated as the 15th Air Intelligence Squadron. On June 1, 1994, it was once more deactivated.

Finally, on Aug 1, 1997, the unit was reactivated as the 15th Reconnaissance Squadron and assigned to fly the *Predator* UAV out of Indian Springs Air Force Auxiliary Field, Nevada.

The squadron has earned 15 combat streamers and 20 decorations during its distinguished history.

(Current as of January 2001)